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NASA NAMES LEADERS FOR ENGINEERING AND SAFETY CENTER

NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe announced the team that will lead the new NASA Engineering and Safety Center (NESC).

The NESC is an independent organization, chartered in the wake of the Space Shuttle Columbia accident, which will coordinate and conduct robust engineering testing and safety assessments to support critical NASA projects and programs.

"I based the NASA Engineering and Safety Center at the agency's original field center, the Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, and I tasked Langley's Director Roy Bridges to get it up and running," said Administrator O'Keefe. "Roy has assembled a dynamic group of recognized experts in the fields of engineering analysis and risk mitigation, and the NESC is open for business."

Ralph Roe Jr. is the Director of the NESC. Roe is a former manager of the Space Shuttle vehicle engineering office at the NASA Johnson Space Center, Houston. The Deputy Director is Dr. Paul M. Munafo, former manager of materials, processes and manufacturing at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), Huntsville, Ala. The Deputy Director for Safety is Larry Crawford, former director of research engineering at the NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards, Calif.

"Their combined 90-plus years of experience in engineering, engineering analyses and problem resolution will ensure the agency is bolstering its assessment capability and strengthening safety policies, processes and analysis capabilities as recommended by the Columbia Accident Investigation Board," Bridges said.

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Roe began his NASA career as a propulsion-system test engineer at the NASA Kennedy Space Center, Fla., and later became Space Shuttle launch director. Under Munafo's leadership, MSFC achieved a national reputation for the analysis and resolution of hardware problems in flight systems. Crawford has held key safety positions in the Army Materiel Command, at three Army field sites and as NASA Director of Safety.

Operationally, the NESC falls under the responsibility of NASA's Office of Safety and Mission Assurance (OSMA.) "The NESC represents an important enhancement to the agency's safety and engineering oversight capabilities," said former astronaut and NASA's Associate Administrator for OSMA, Bryan O'Connor.

As chartered, the NESC workforce will be supplemented through partnerships with other federal agencies, national laboratories, industry, the military and academia.

Areas for independent assessment will be carefully selected and managed with a strong focus on customer needs. Work will be prioritized based on technical risk, the need for independence and the potential for value-added contribution.

For more information about NASA and agency programs on the Internet, visit:

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For more information about the NESC on the Internet, visit:

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